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➤CONTRIBUTED❖NOTES.◀

On Job III. 14, **הַבְּנִים חֲרֻבוֹת לָמוֹ**.—Matthes (*Het Boek Job*, 1876, p. 67) and Kuenen (*Theologisch Tijdschrift*, 1873, p. 518) both suspect the reading of this passage, the latter remarking, "Corruptions of this kind can easily be pointed out, but will seldom if ever be cured." Bickell, however, who is not in general slow to correct, adheres to the Massoretic text, explaining **חֲרֻבוֹת**, with Schlottmann and Delitzsch, of palaces or monuments destined to become, or (if mausolea) to remain desolate and uninhabited (see his article in *Zeitschrift fuer katholische Theologie*, 1886, Heft 3). Dillmann and Davidson both see that this puts too great a strain upon the expression (cf. Job xv. 28), besides being opposed to Hebrew usage. Both, too, agree with the Dutch critics in suspecting corruption, but neither of them has proposed this very simple correction, viz., for **לָמוֹ** to read **עוֹלָם**; cf., for the phrase **חֲרֻבוֹת עוֹלָם**, Isa. LII. 9; LXI. 4; Jer. XLIX. 13. These three passages, however, need not of course control our exegesis of the corrected phrase. That **עוֹלָם** may have the sense of "the primeval world" (*πάλαιος κόσμος*, 2 Pet. II. 5) is clear from Job XXII. 15; cf. Ps. CXLIII. 4 (Lam. III. 6); Isa. XLIV. 7; Ezek. XXVI. 20. The last-mentioned passage is specially helpful, because it says (if I am not mistaken) that not only, as in Job XXII. 15, 16, the primeval men themselves, but also their cities, had been thrust down by the Divine Judge into She'ol (cf. Matt. XI. 23). It is of this nether world that the impassioned patriarch Job is speaking. That the wise men whom he and his friends represent meditated on the fate of the antediluvians, is apparent from the passages already referred to. How natural it seems that Job should speak of himself, imaginatively, as meeting in She'ol the mighty kings and counsellors who had built those spacious ruins which challenged the attention of newly admitted "shades" (*Refaim*)! I am well aware of the ingenious explanations of the received text which Matthes and others have collected. To each of them there is some cogent objection. Perhaps it may be objected to my own exegesis that **בְּנֵי חֲרֻבוֹת** means, in usage, to "*build up* ruined places;" so it does in Isa. LXI. 4; but must it mean this in a widely different context? We must remember that, according to the popular Semitic belief, the judgment of God was limited to the "land of the living;" tyrant-kings and oppressed subjects were alike "cut away from this hand" in the under-world. Hence, in spite of Job XXII. 15, 16, an innocent child (of rich people) might, in She'ol, become the neighbor of great though sinful kings (*as yet* there was no division in Hades according to the character of the previous life). Notice, in conclusion, that Job III. 14, interpreted as above, casts a fresh light on verse 15; the speaker is on the verge of the complaint which embitters the subsequent outpourings of his much-tried soul. I mean that we need not explain the gold and silver there mentioned of treasures buried in mausolea, but interpret it in accordance with Isa. v. 14. All the glory of these mighty kings has gone down with them and with their old-world ruined cities into the under-world.

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